September/October 1986

Lasca Leaves

Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

ALICE THOMAS REJOINS BOARD AS FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

More than a decade ago, Alice (Mrs. Dudley W.) Frost Thomas set a precedent when she was the first lady to be elected president of the California Arboretum Foundation Board of Trustees. After a sojourn in Hawaii and San Francisco, Mrs. Thomas has returned to Southern California and has again been elected president of the Foundation. Once more she arrives on the scene just when the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum is poised on the brink of a new era.

For the first time since Harry Sims Bent laid out the original garden, the Arboretum will have a long-range master plan for the grounds and a new fund-raising strategy to support the changes. Mrs. Thomas candidly expressed her enthusiasm for these inter-related projects, initiated under the direction of former Foundation president R. Kirk Evans.

Wendy Sekovich

New Trustees Richard A. Grant Jr. (far left) and Hannah G. Bradley (far right) flank new officers Alice (Mrs. Dudley) Thomas, president, and Richard Ray, first vice-president.

"The master plan is our number one job," Mrs. Thomas responded when questioned about goals during her term as president. She then went on to outline the approximate timetable for plans that will guide the Arboretum as it moves into the 21st century.

In July, Grant Jones from the landscape architectural firm of Jones & Jones held a series of workshops with Mr. Ching, the Board and the Arboretum staff to review the objectives of the Arboretum and suggest capital projects and programs that would move the Arboretum toward these goals.

Jones & Jones is also expected to develop some constructive, original ideas about existing features of the Arboretum such as the gift shop and coffee shop. Then the firm will do a tentative sketch providing a visual concept of their suggestions and a brochure describing the plans. Fund raisers will be able to use this prospectus when approaching large donors.

After the Board raises funds using the feasibility study by fund raising counselors Brakeley John Price Jones Inc., the landscape architects will do a detailed rendering of the master plan.

At the meeting the Board of Trustees also elected a new slate of officers who will serve with Mrs. Thomas in 1986-87. Richard Ray is first vice-president with Suzie (Mrs. Richard) Miller as second vice-president. Hugh Barton will serve as secretary-treasurer.

STAIRWAY GARDEN DEDICATED AT ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

THE LATEST addition to the Arboretum, the Stairway Garden, was dedicated at the June 17 meeting of the California Arboretum Foundation Board of Trustees.

The new garden links the Demonstration Home Garden to Ayres Hall with a series of stairs and landings. The California Landscape Contractors Association, Los Angeles/San Gabriel Valley Chapter donated materials and labor for the project as part of their 1985 Garden Show display, a gift estimated at $80,000.

The garden, designed by Chris Rosmini, is water efficient making use of drought tolerant Australian-type shrubs. Railroad ties were used to stabilize the steep slope, and decorative bricks of contrasting grays constitute the walking area. Benches are featured on each landing so visitors may take advantage of the serene garden.

Rose Marie Head, past president of CLCA, accepted a plaque in honor of her late husband, Henry Soto, for his contribution to the garden. Chris Rosmini and Glenn Koyama were also awarded plaques in recognition of the major roles they played in this development.

Wendy Sekovich

Grant Jones (left) from Jones and Jones joins Dr. Samuel Ayres Jr. and second vice-president Suzie (Mrs. Richard F.) Miller in sampling the traveling buffet at the Board of Trustees meeting on June 17.

CHINESE STUDENTS COMPARE ARBORETUM, SHANGHAI GARDEN

MISS CHEN NIAN-NIAN and Mr. Zhang Shun-Yong had just arrived at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum in June when the deluge of questions began. As the first representatives from the Shanghai Botanical Garden to intern at the Arboretum, they responded to everyone's interest with gracious good humor in excellent, if cautious, English.

During an early interview they described their backgrounds and the areas they hope to explore during their stay at the Arboretum. Both Miss Chen and Mr. Zhang received degrees roughly equivalent to a Western master of science from the Department of Horticulture at the Shanghai Agricultural College. At the Shanghai Botanical Garden they are among the 25 holders of degrees and about 30 vocational school graduates in the 600-person staff who operate the 175-acre public garden.

The young Chinese interns drew many comparisons between their home institution and the Arboretum. Shanghai Botanical Garden lies only about three miles outside the city, providing, like the Arboretum, an oasis of flowers for millions of nearby residents and tourists. In 1978 the garden opened to the public on the site of a former nursery which had specialized in floriculture and penjing, the miniaturized trees we

Wendy Sekovich

California Landscape Contractors Association past president Rose Marie Head, (left) president Glenn Koyama (center) and Tom Matsuoka admire Stairway Garden that the Association constructed and donated to the Arboretum.

know as bonsai. Today the Shanghai Botanical Garden maintains a notable collection of these venerable potted landscapes, some as much as 250 years old. Besides orchards and extensive collections of peonies, conifers, azaleas, roses, maples, osmanthus and bamboos, the garden features greenhouses and educational facilities.

Many of the programs at the Garden are the same as at the Arboretum. Despite a more variable climate than Southern California's, the Garden is increasing its collection of ornamental subtropical plants. Honorable Director Wang Dajun also oversees an active plant introduction program, evaluating plants from abroad in a plant introduction center. Because the Arboretum also places a high priority on introducing exotic plants into the local landscape, Miss Chen and Mr. Zhang will probably be involved in some phase of the program while they are here.

By exchanging plants with other botanical institutions around the world just as the Arboretum does, the Shanghai Botanical Garden facilitates the spread of botanical knowledge through reports, lectures and specimens. While at the Arboretum, the interns will be asked to use their language skills in confirming the identity of a number of plants in the Asiatic-North American Section. Suzanne Granger, herbarium curator, explained that many of the texts on plant characteristics in the Plant Science Library are printed in Chinese, making it difficult for Western scientists to complete the three-way connection between the living collection, the library and the herbarium.

Miss Chen's interests include tender foliage plants and orchids since she works in the greenhouses at the Shanghai Botanical Garden. During her time at the Arboretum she hopes to continue working with orchid culture and hybridization. Growing up in the city has made Miss Chen place special value upon the beauty of plants. "Nature is a gift," she said, adding pragmatically, "plus it cuts down on the noise."

Mr. Zhang's childhood, on the other hand, was spent in the countryside, developing in him a long lasting interest in horticulture. His goal is to make a more beautiful environment for city people through garden planning.

While in the United States he plans to continue working with camellias and rhododendrons. In Shanghai he was trying to develop an evergreen yellow azalea by cross-breeding with other species of rhododendrons. Although Mr. Zhang would like to engage in more work with the japonica and reticulata species of camellia, the collection of

Maresa Archer

Suzanne Granger, herbarium curator, (left) and interns from the Shanghai Botanical Garden Chen Nian-Nian and Zhang Shun-Yong work together verifying plant names on the Arboretum grounds.

these species at the Shanghai Botanical Garden is not very extensive. He expects that more varieties will be developed with more crossbreeding.

Although a few months may be too short a time to accomplish everything Miss Chen and Mr. Zhang have set out to do, their visit may be the beginning of a closer relationship between the Arboretum and the Shanghai Botanical Garden. The two gardens have so many similar purposes from plant introduction to education that a mutual exchange would benefit both.

DIRECTOR FRANCIS CHING EARNS LIFE MEMBERSHIP WITH AABGA

Director Francis Ching has been awarded an honorary life membership in the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta. He is only the seventh person in the organization's history to receive this honor.

Within a year of his appointment as Director of Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens in 1970, Mr. Ching joined the AABGA and became actively involved in the organization's leadership. In 1974 he was named to the Board of Directors where he served until elected vice-president of the AABGA in 1978 and president in 1980.

Although today the AABGA roster includes most of the major gardens in the nation, this was not always the case. Founded in 1950, the organization grew slowly for the next two decades. The turning point for the AABGA was the report of the 1972 Future Directions Committee in which Mr. Ching actively participated. Many of the recommendations of that committee, including the hiring of an Executive Director and the establishment of an Administrative Office, have been accomplished.

Other committee recommendations included forming regional chapters and improving publications. The subsequent growth of these chapters has been phenomenal, and during the two years that the Arboretum

Francis Ching

staff edited the AABGA publications under the leadership of Mr. Ching, the issues developed a modernized, more timely format.

Mr. Ching was the prime mover in establishing the present format of the AABGA annual meeting and chaired the 1973 meeting held at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. He was also instrumental in organizing the Plant Science Data Center as an AABGA pilot program and in establishing an accreditation program in cooperation with the American Association of Museums.

His energy and vision also led to the North American Horticultural Certification Program in 1981. This program provides an internationally recognized standard of competence for professionals in horticulture who are self-taught as well as for those with a formal education in horticulture at an accredited institution.

When bestowing its most prestigious award, the awards committee chooses "an AABGA member who, through sustained effort over many years, has made a distinguished contribution to the advancement of the aims and objectives of the AABGA . . . ." Mr. Ching's record over the past 15 years with the AABGA clearly shows how richly he deserves their Honorary Life Membership.

ARBORETUM HOSTS NATIONAL SPECIAL LIBRARIES GROUP

Lunching under the ramada on the south side of Ayres Hall of Environmental Education, 43 members of the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries began their first visit to the Arboretum on June 6. The guests, mostly librarians, represented many of the botanical gardens, arboreta, and horticultural societies in the United States and Canada. After the luncheon sponsored by the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens and served by California Arboretum Foundation volunteers, they heard greetings from Director Francis Ching and took a tram tour of the grounds guided by taxonomist Jim Bauml. The tour ended with a visit to the Plant Science Library.

This 18th annual meeting, the first to be held in Southern California, was organized by Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden with cooperation from the Department's Plant Science Librarian, Joan DeFato, and Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. Other events of the meeting included visits to the Huntington Botanical Gardens, Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, and Lotusland, an estate in Montecito.

Most of the group were strangers to the Los Angeles area. Although they came mainly to see the local plant libraries and to exchange information, they were amazed by the plants themselves. They particularly admired the many and large oleanders, the clouds of jacaranda with agapanthus underneath and the flamboyant bougainvillea.

A post-conference visit to South Coast Botanic Garden was hosted for the remaining 15 members by South Coast volunteer and CBHL member Virginia Gardner.

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Practical Garden Work—

Interns Flex Green Thumbs

PLANTING CYCADS, pruning trees, trimming hedges and keying out plants are just a few of the jobs undertaken by the 1986 interns in the Horticultural Intern Program at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. Nine of the 11 interns are from California; two of them from China, Miss Chen and Mr. Zhang, tell their story elsewhere in this issue.

The California students said the work was what they expected, hard but educational.

"I learned I didn't want to be on the tree crew," Gloria Shams said, laughing. A senior in Landscape Maintenance at Cal Poly Pomona, Ms. Shams said she is gaining a lot of practical experience.

"I'm getting some basic hands-on experience that will be helpful in the future. We work with a variety of personalities and get to see how supervision is handled," she added.

Erich Rick, a senior in the Ornamental Horticulture program at Cal Poly Pomona, agrees that the practical aspects of the internship are a plus. "You see the problems that come up in the field firsthand; it's not like just reading it in a text book. It's totally different out in the field."

The interns' duties changed every few days so they were able to sample many of the different tasks needed to run a public garden. Santos Vazquez, a freshman at Mt. San Antonio College in Landscape Construction, said the variety of jobs was very helpful. "I'm learning things I'll need to know in the business of landscaping," said Mr. Vazquez as he watered plants in the nursery. "Even learning how to water properly – if you don't do it right they'll die."

Other California interns were: David John, Citrus College; Nancy

Francis Ching

The 1986 interns gather in the new Stairway Garden. They are (from left) Zhang Shun-Yong, David John, Erich Rick, Santos Vazquez, Dan King, Janine Palermo, Gale Thomas, Gloria Shams, Nancy Cochran, Chen Nian-Nian and Daniel Lawrence.

Cochran, Glendale College; Janine Palermo, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo; and Gale Thomas, Humboldt State. Cal Poly Pomona students interning at the Arboretum included Daniel Lawrence and Daniel King as well as Mr. Rick, Mr. Vasquez and Ms. Shams.

UPPER RIGHT Daniel Lawrence, Janine Palermo and Gale Thomas clear bamboo in the Jungle and Prehistoric Garden.

LOWER RIGHT Students (from left) Gale Thomas, Dan Lawrence, Gloria Shams and Janine Palermo attack vegetation choking area being cleared for the expanded cycad collection.

BELOW Gloria Shams lops off trailing vines. (Photographs by Francis Ching).

ABOVE waiting for their morning work assignments are (from left) interns David John, Nancy Cochran and Erich Rick.

ABOVE Janine Palermo works amid a thicket of wild grape vines and eucalyptus saplings.

BELOW Veteran nurseryman Bill Neubauer (left) shows interns Daniel King (center) and Santos Vazquez how to train seedlings.

LOS ANGELES GARDEN SHOW '86

FALL FANTASIES

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

OCTOBER 17 - OCTOBER 26 • 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Daily

BENEFIT PREVIEW ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16 – 6:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

LOS ANGELES STATE AND COUNTY ARBORETUM
301 NORTH BALDWIN AVENUE, ARCADIA, CA 91006-2697

LOS ANGELES STATE AND COUNTY ARBORETUM, Arcadia

AUGUST 30 - SEPTEMBER 1—
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Fern and Plant Show
Los Angeles International Fern Society, Inc.

SEPTEMBER 27-28—9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Bonsai Show
Akebono Bonsai Society

OCTOBER 16 Evening
Garden Show Preview Party

OCTOBER 17 - 26—10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
"Fall Fantasies"
LOS ANGELES GARDEN SHOW

NOVEMBER 8-9—Sat. 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Sun. 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Rose Show
San Gabriel Valley Rose & Horticultural Society

NOVEMBER 15-16—9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Bonsai Society
Santa Anita Bonsai Society

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER

DESCANSO GARDENS
La Canada Flintridge

OCTOBER 4-5—9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Flower Arrangements Show
Flower Arrangers Guild

OCTOBER 11-12—9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Annual Plant Sale
Descanso Gardens Guild

OCTOBER 25—10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Fund Raiser Boutique
Descanso Gardens Guild

NOVEMBER 1-2—8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Chrysanthemum Show
Glendale Chrysanthemum Society

NOVEMBER 8-9—9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Ikebana Show
International Ikebana Society

SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN, Palos Verdes Peninsula

OCTOBER 5 — 2 p.m.
Lecture "Containers For Winter and Holiday Color"
Eleanor Barker, Palos Verdes Begonia Farm horticulturist

OCTOBER 12 — 2 p.m.
Lecture "A Tourist's Look at Nature in New Zealand"
Lorin Gillogly, entomologist

OCTOBER 18-19—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
"Art For Fun(d)s Sake"
South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation

OCTOBER 26 — 2 p.m.
Demonstration "Designing Wreaths"
Lindy Stroud, La Fluer

OCTOBER 29 - NOVEMBER 1—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Country Crafts Sale
South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation